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NEWS

Chamber of Commerce hosts breakfast with candidates for office

PETER CASEY | STAFF WRITER

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Candidates for town elections were at the Chamber of Commerce breakfast on March 13. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/PETER CASEY

Winchester Chamber of Commerce served up nine candidates fo
office at a candidates' breakfast Wednesday morning, March 13.

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was held in the All-Season Barn at Wright Locke Farm and was attended by about 50 residents.

Those candidates on the panel were Select Board hopefuls Dorothy Simboli, Mike Bettencourt, and Vince Dixon. Candidate Bill McGonigle was not able to attend and the moderator WinCan host Allan Eyden read a statement from McGonigle.

School Committee candidates were Carey Sue Barney, Tom Hopcroft, Tim Matthews, and My Linh Truong.

Also in attendance were Board of Health candidate Shannon Scott Vernaglia (running unopposed), and Planning Board candidate Brian Vernaglia (running uncontested).

The moderator presented the panel of candidates with two questions, and each were given a limited amount of time to answer.

Select Board candidates were asked what about their position on "classification with respect to property value assessments," and what was their "vision for downtown Winchester for the next five years."

School Committee questions addressed the front burner issue that has lately frustrated many parents, the School Department's literacy program. Candidates were asked if they felt "if there needs to be a change and if so, what is your plan to improve upon/change the current program?" The other School Committee question asked the candidates how they would address the issue of declining enrollment.

Following the pre-planned questions the moderator fielded questions from the audience.

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The School Committee candidates seem to have some agreement among themselves to the pilot program currently in place for grading students in sixth -grade at McCall Middle School, mentioning the communications failure in notifying parents about the program and that it's only a pilot program. Most of the School Committee candidates agreed there needed to be some changes with the program.

The other two candidates for Planning Board and Board of Health read statements about their backgrounds and qualifications. There were no questions presented to them.

In the audience were also a few Town Meeting candidates.

The annual town election in Winchester will take place on March 26, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. All precincts will vote at the Winchester High School Gymnasium, located at 80 Skillings Road.

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CORRECTION: This article was updated to correct that a School Committee question about grading was at the middle school and that not every candidate was in agreement about suggested changes to the program.

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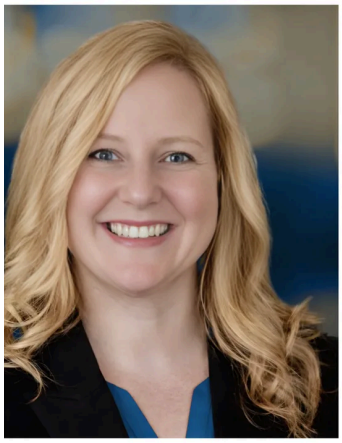

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses

NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for rente

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis

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as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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